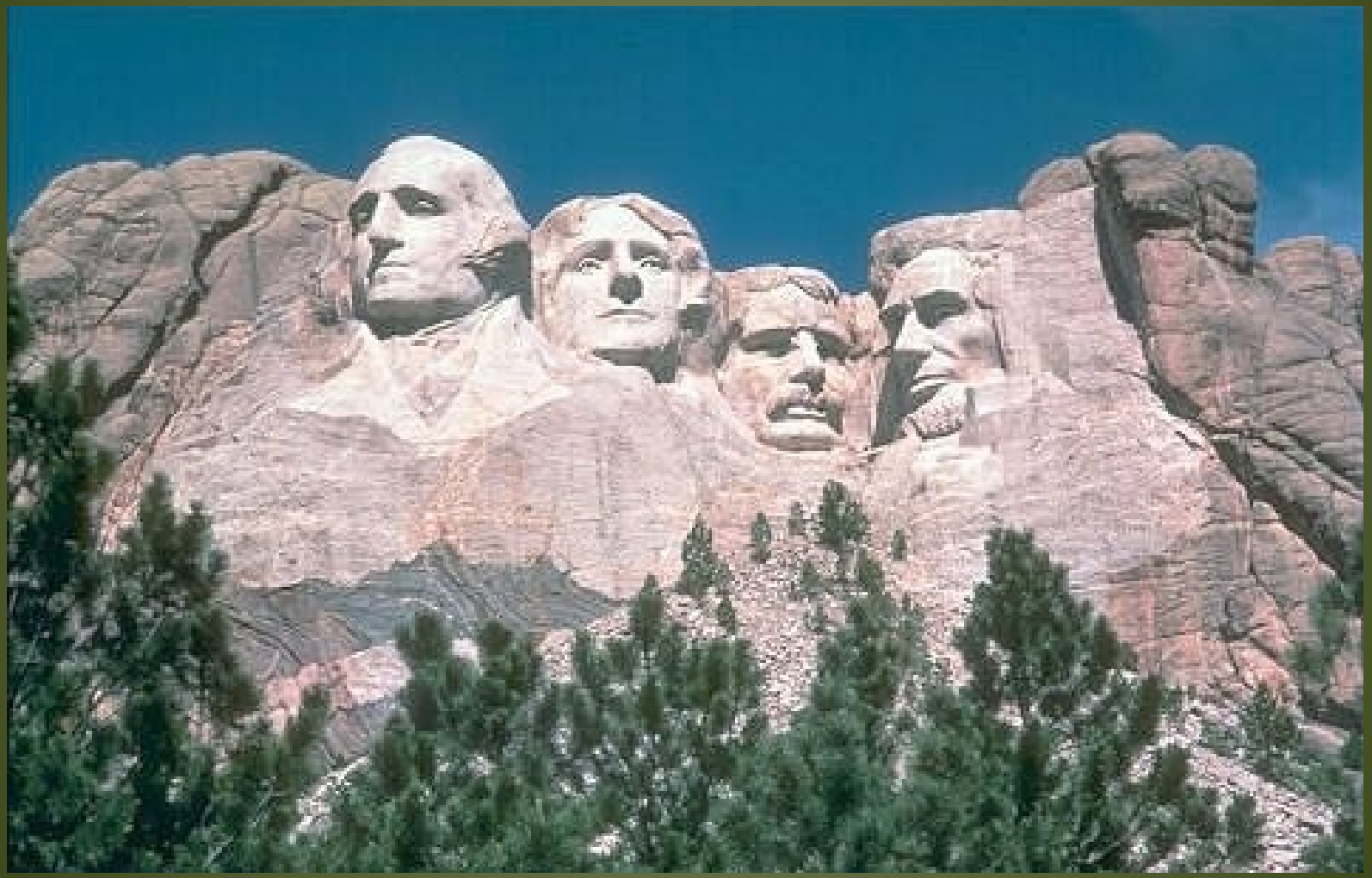
Acceptance of the Modified Landscape



BLM Renewable Energy Summit

August 2009

Visual Resource Management

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

Many Different Uses of the Public Land

- Oil and Gas
- Coal
- Metals/Minerals
- Uranium
- Wind
- Geothermal
- Energy transmission
- Aggregate
- Communication systems

56 million people live within 30 minutes of BLM administered lands

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

America's Energy Resources on the Public Land

Level of potential of Renewable Energy activity across the BLM landscape (256 million acres)

Wind Energy
(20 million acres)

Solar Energy
(119 million acres)

Geothermal
(143 million acres)

Energy Corridors
(5,000 miles of
~3,500 Ft. corridors)

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

What is Visual Resource Management

- BLM's systematic approach to understanding and inventorying visual resource values and management of those values.
- BLM's system for managing the human concern for scenery and changes made to the visual environment.
- BLM's means of influencing the use of good design principles.
- VRM does not judge aesthetics, it measures level of contrast created.
- Is a not discretionary resource management policy.

Legal Authority for Managing Scenery

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 1969

- Assure aesthetically pleasing surroundings
- Require agencies use a system based on environmental Design arts for planning and mitigation

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) 1976

- Protect scenic values
- Maintain an inventory of scenic values
- Minimize damage to scenic values

Principle Components of VRM System

1. Visual Resource Inventory Classes Scenic Values (Handbook H-8410)

2. Visual Resource Management Classes - Objectives (Land Use Planning)

3. Design/ Evaluate activities to meet objectives (Project level)

Visual Resource Inventory

1. Visual Resource Inventory Classes Scenic Values (Handbook H-8410)
   - Scenic Quality, Sensitivity Level, Distance Zones
   - Required for every acre of BLM land
   - Serves as information for land use decision making
   - Serves as the baseline for NEPA analysis

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

Sensitivities

- Recreational settings
- National Scenic Byways
- National Scenic and Historic Trails
- Native American religious sites
- Local community socio-economic values
- National Parks
- Travel corridors
- Cultural Resources
- Wilderness
- Wild and Scenic Rivers

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

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NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

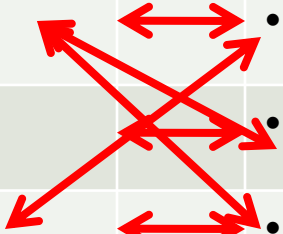
Principle Components of VRM System

2 Visual Resource Management Classes - Objectives (Land Use Planning)

- Required for every acre of BLM land
- Part of land use decisions that considers visual values and land uses together

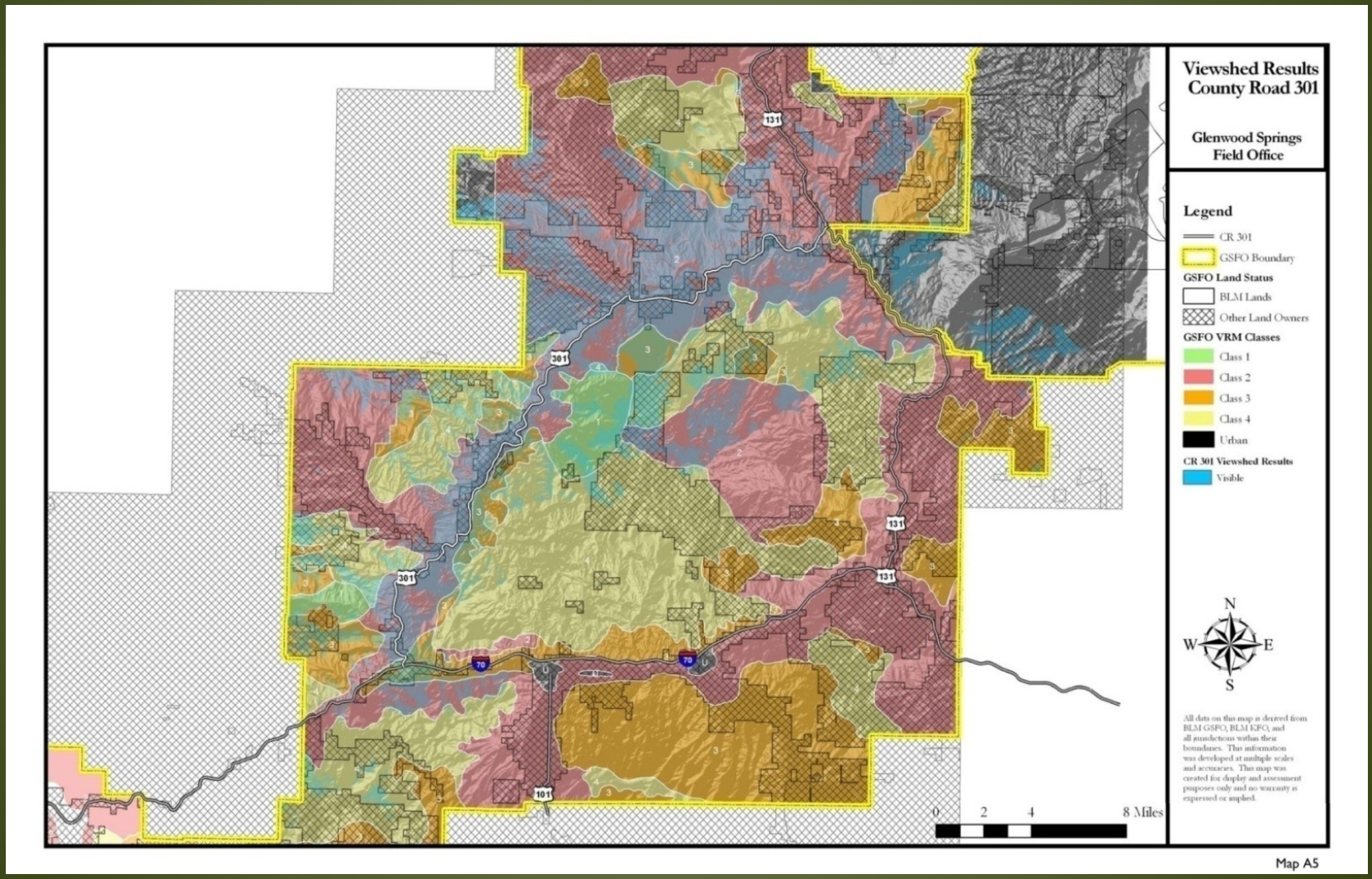
VRI and VRM Classes

Classes	Inventory (Pre-planning)		Management (Land Use Planning)
I	• Special Designation (Congressional or administrative)	↔	• Preservation
II	• High Visual Values	↔	• Low levels of change
III	• Medium Visual Values	↔	• Moderate levels of change
IV	• Low Visual Values	↔	• Major levels of change



NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

2 Analysis - Understanding the compatibility between Visual Values and Resource Activities



Viewshed Analysis

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

Instructional Memorandums

IM 2009-043 - Wind Energy Development Policy

" VRM classes are not intended to be used to exclude or preclude land uses . . . . meet VRM objectives established in the land use plan."

The emphasis is on allowing planning and design the opportunity before judging the non-conformance of a potential land use.

IM 2009-167 - Application of the Visual Resource Management Program to Renewable Energy

Principle Components of VRM System

3 Design/ Evaluate activities to meet objectives (Project level)

- Contrast Rating Form – (Handbook H-8431)

- Working with projects (form, line, color, texture, scale) to meet objectives

Contrast Rating

Looking at the landscape and understanding the opportunities

Form

Line

Color

Texture

What if the project doesn't meet the VRM objective?

Options

1. Mitigate
2. Deny
3. Amend the Plan

Research and Tools

- VRI/ VRM Data Standard and Geodatabase
- Visual Risk Assessument
- Contrast Rating Software
- Distance Zone research
- Camouflage technology and Application

VRM Training

- 5 - Day VRM Course – In Las Vegas, week of October 26
- 2 - Day Short Course – We bring it to the Field Office
- Discussing a 1-Day Short Course for Managers and State Leadership Teams

Closing Thoughts

- Consider visual issues and VRM objectives in the early in the planning stages

- Outreach to the public in the early stages of project development

VRM Website - www.blm.gov/nstc/VRM/